N°4

A

SERMON

Preach'd in the Pariſh-Church of

Chriſt-Church, LONDON;

On *Thurſday* MAY the 4th, 1738.

BEING THE

Time of the YEARLY MEETING of the CHILDREN Educated in the CHARITY-SCHOOLS, in and about the Cities of *London* and *Weſtminſter*.

BY *JOHN CONYBEARE*, D. D.
Dean of *Chriſt-Church* in *Oxford*.

Publiſh'd at the Requeſt of the Gentlemen concerned in the ſaid CHARITY.

To which is annexed,

An ACCOUNT of the Origin and Deſigns of the *Society for Promoting Chriſtian Knowledge*.

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A

SERMON

Preach'd in the Parish Church of

Christ-Church, LONDON;

On Thursday MAY the 4th, 1738

GALATIANS VI. 9.

And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due Season we ſhall reap, if we faint not.

THO' the Expreſſion [*Well-doing*] in the Text be ſuppos'd, as to its general Senſe, to include under it every Inſtance of right moral Conduct, yet our Apoſtle plainly uſes it with Reſtriction, and deſigns, in this Place, to inculcate on his *Galatians* a generous Charity and Beneficence.

IF we look back to the 6th verſe of this Chapter, we may read, *Let him that is taught in the Word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good Things:* And if we look forward to the Words immediately following, we ſhall find the ſame Subject purſu'd; *As we have therefore Opportunity let us do Good unto all Men, eſpecially unto them who are of the Houſ-*

hold of Faith. The Words of my Text therefore being intermediate, and connecting theſe two Paſſages together, it is evident, that the Expreſſion [*Well-doing*] here us'd, muſt ſignify the ſame as [*to communicate in good Things*, or *to do Good.*]

AND great Reaſon was there *why* our Apoſtle ſhould recommend, with a particular Force, this Duty, if we conſider the Circumſtances of the Times he wrote in. The Chriſtian Church was then in its Infant State, and call'd for every Support that could poſſibly be given. It could gain upon the World but by Degrees, had Men in thoſe Times been leſs prejudic'd than we find they were; during which Seaſon, and 'til the Faith ſhould meet with publick Approbation, the Profeſſors of it muſt expect to meet with no ſmall ſhare of Difficulties.

BUT theſe were wonderfully heighthen'd by the Sharpneſs every where expreſs'd againſt them; — by the Malice of private Perſons, and the Indignation of the then Government. The firſt Chriſtians were in a State of Perſecution, — forc'd to flee from one Place to another, and unable to ſubſiſt, (many of them, I mean,) but by the good Offices of others: In which Circumſtances, as the Occaſions for Charity were great, ſo the Concern to diſcharge this Duty muſt be proportionable.

STIL greater Reaſon had our Apoſtle to exhort his Diſciples to be charitable, if we conſider that the Circumſtances of the Contributor were almoſt as unfavourable, as the Condition

dition of thoſe to whom he was expected to contribute. If *ſome* actually labour'd under Perſecution, *others* knew not how ſoon this might prove their own Caſe. What therefore Men are ſometimes pleas'd to call *common Prudence*, might be thought to teach them to take care of themſelves in the firſt Place; — to lay in ſome tolerable Proviſion againſt an evil Day juſt coming, — and not to reduce themſelves to a Condition of needing That Charity from others, which was now expected from themſelves.

BUT, our Bleſſed Lord hath taught us *to take no Thought for the Morrow*; --- to truſt that Providence, which ever ſuperintends our Affairs, --- and not to deſert our preſent Duty, by putting needleſs Caſes of our own future Wants; which, whenever they happen, (if they ſhall happen at all,) may be provided for in Ways we cannot think of. Matt. vi. 34.

HOWEVER, it muſt be confeſs'd that the Conſideration laſt mention'd, with ſome others which I have not time to enlarge on here, do really throw ſuch Difficulties in the Way, as make an Exhortation to Perſeverance in this Duty neceſſary. Our Apoſtle was ſenſible of This; and therefore hath in the Text ſuggeſted a Motive more than ſufficient to ballance all theſe Difficulties. *In due Seaſon*, ſays he, *we ſhall reap, if we faint not*: — reap, not only preſent Comfort and Satisfaction, (for that neceſſarily ariſes from the Diſcharge of this Duty,) but likewiſe a Return of the like good Offices,

Offices, if we happen to want them, — the Bleſſing of Providence to prevent our Want of them; — but above all, the Rewards of diſtinguiſh'd Virtue in the other World.

BUT the preſent Times, God be thank'd, are more favourable than thoſe were in which the Apoſtle liv'd. Proper Objects of Charity do not ſo frequently occur, in this Nation at leaſt, where the ſtanding Laws of our Country have made ſuch commendable Proviſion for the Neceſſitous. Every Man hath a legal Right to be ſubſiſted. And were theſe Laws as duly executed, as they have been wiſely made, we ſhould have leſs Complaints of the Miſeries of Poverty: We might then be free from the Clamours of the pretended, or the real Poor; who, if pretended only, ſhould be chaſtis'd; and if real, ſhould be provided for in ſome meaſure by the Publick.

YET, notwithſtanding all that can poſſibly be done by the wiſeſt Law-givers, and the moſt conſcientious Magiſtrates, there will be ſtil Room enough left for Charity. There will be ſinking Families, which by a timely Benevolence may be ſav'd from Ruin. There will be modeſt Poor, who know not how to aſk the publick Relief. And there will be Others, who are incapable of providing for themſelves what they moſt truly need, — what the Laws have made no Proviſion for, — and what therefore every Perſon, (whoſe Circumſtances will allow it,) ſhould contribute towards the providing for them.

IT will be eaſily ſeen that I am here pleading for the charitable Education of Children; thoſe, I mean principally, whom their Parents are unable to educate in ſuch a manner, as to fit them for being uſeful Members of the Commonwealth. Perſons in this low Rank, who may be one Day the Support, or the Plague of the Publick, ſhould be taken care of for our *own* ſakes, if not for *theirs*; — ſhould be form'd to Induſtry and Modeſty; — ſhould be taught thoſe Arts of Life, which may hereafter ſubſiſt Them, and ſerve the Publick; and be poſſeſs'd early of ſuch religious Sentiments, as may direct the right Uſe and Exerciſe of thoſe Arts.

TO favour this Deſign, is the Occaſion of the preſent Solemnity. And that I may contribute my Share towards this Excellent Work, let me beg your Attention whilſt I endeavour

FIRST, To repreſent in general the Obligations we are under to do Good, and the Neceſſity of perſevering in this Duty.

SECONDLY, To point out ſome of the more conſiderable Obſtructions in the Diſcharge of this Duty; from whence will appear what Occaſion there is to exhort Men to the Diſcharge of it.

THIRDLY, To remove thoſe Obſtructions, by ſhewing that they are unreaſonable and groundleſs: And this ſhall be done with a particular View to the Charity now before us.

And, LASTLY, To explain and enforce the Motive here ſuggeſted by the Apoſtle.

FIRST

FIRST then, I am to repreſent in general the Obligations we are under to do Good.

A BEATEN Subject this, and ſuch as hath been treated to the beſt Advantage by Others. Arguments therefore entirely new will not be expected, where all that can be ſaid hath been ſaid already. Nor can I think myſelf wanting in my Part, if I prove ſo fortunate as to recollect what hath been ſaid by Predeceſſors on theſe Occaſions, and give it ſuch a Turn, as may ſerve to make ſome Impreſſion on my Hearers.

AND in enforcing this Duty, I am much favour'd by the Nature of the Subject itſelf. For whereas other Duties, of high Importance, have ſomething in them rugged, and require Time, and much Pains to render them agreeable; Goodneſs hath ſo ſtrong a Foundation in our Nature, that by purſuing it in Practice we are found to gratify Ourſelves, in proportion as we ſerve Others.

EVERY Being capable of Perception, is naturally pleas'd with what is agreeable to it. This we call Good; the Enjoyment of which, when it is rightly underſtood and duly purſu'd, is the End which God intended for us.

GOOD enjoy'd produces Happineſs, as it doth, whilſt in view, Deſire: And this Deſire, if it reſpects the Good of Ourſelves only, is founded in Self-Love; but, if it regards the Good of others, Benevolence. Theſe are not in Reality inconſiſtent with each other. In moſt

moſt Caſes they are rather coincident: And ſo every Conſideration which ſtrengthens Self-Love, will be found equally favourable to Benevolence.

BUT it hath prov'd the Misfortune, that the Intereſts of different Perſons have been thought to interfere; and the Good of One hath been eſteem'd as Evil or Hurtful to Others. Hence hath ariſen a Diſtinction between Good taken in a *relative*, and in an *abſolute* Senſe; the former having a reſpect to One, or to Some only, the latter, in a greater or leſs Degree, to All.

IT is upon account of thoſe Intereſts, which (as I ſaid before,) have been thought to interfere, that Men are ſometimes led to hate one another, and to purſue and delight in the Calamities of their Brethren. There doth not ſeem to ſubſiſt in any Man a Principle of *abſolute* Malice. No one doth Miſchief merely for the ſake of Miſchief. Whatever he chuſes, appears at leaſt to be good; — good, in ſome Senſe or other, to himſelf: For no one chuſes without a Reaſon; and that Reaſon, whatever it be, makes it appear better to chuſe the one Part, than the other.

NOW, if no Man can delight in the doing Miſchief, merely for the ſake of doing it, we may advance a Step farther, and obſerve, that every Man muſt have within him a Principle of a contrary Tendency; — a Principle, which operates indeed differently in different Perſons, but which directs him to delight rather in doing Good, than Evil. For as he himſelf is

naturally pleas'd with the Enjoyment of Good; and as every other Perſon is equally pleas'd in like Circumſtances; ſo, where he is ſuppos'd not to have made his own Intereſts interfere with other Mens, they will be always found to be in ſome Senſe the ſame; and ſo he muſt delight in the Happineſs of Others proportionably as he delights in his Own.

To ſupport theſe Reflections we may obſerve farther, that Nature hath implanted in us a Principle of Compaſſion, — a ſort of Fellow-feeling with our Brethren; which, as it brings their Calamities home, and makes them our own, ſo it inclines us to endeavour the Removal of them in the ſame manner as if they directly affected ourſelves. This Principle operates even antecedently to Reaſon, tho' every After-Reflection ſtrengthens and confirms it. Hence Joy and Pleaſure immediately ariſe upon the Performance of a good-natur'd Action. The Labour and Expence lay'd out upon it, are repaid by the grateful Recollections of our Minds; and what our Saviour teaches is juſtified by Experience, *It is more bleſſed to give, than to receive.*

Acts xx. 35.

THE ſame which hath been noted as to relieving Men under Calamity, holds likewiſe as to the improving their Enjoyments. For, we have a certain Senſe of the Happineſs of others, as well as of their Sufferings. All Men, even the moſt barbarous feel it in ſome Caſes; — where the Intereſts of their Friends, their Relations, their Children are concern'd: and would

would proportionably feel it in all others, if they had not poſſeſs'd themſelves of this monſtrous Principle, that private Good cannot be purſu'd conſiſtently with the Publick.

FROM conſidering the ſtrong Biaſs which Nature hath implanted in us towards Acts of Charity and Beneficence, and the conſequent Pleaſure and Satisfaction we receive from following this Bent, let us paſs on, and examine a little what Sentiments are apt to ariſe in our Minds from reflecting on a like Conduct in other Men.

GOODNESS exercis'd toward ourſelves we ſhall approve, no doubt; becauſe, having the moſt near Feeling of its Effects, we cannot but like and approve the Cauſe. But, Are we not proportionably pleas'd with a like Conduct even where we ourſelves have no immediate Intereſt? Are we not apt to eſteem and praiſe the Man who doth a generous Action? Do we not court an Acquaintance with him, and delight ourſelves in his Converſation?

SELF-INTEREST, it may be ſaid, will occaſion thus much; becauſe, the ſame Principle which render'd him beneficent to Others, may render him equally ſerviceable to Ourſelves. If there be any thing in this, yet ſurely it cannot be thought the Whole, when it is conſider'd, that we are equally affected with Eſteem and Reverence toward generous Perſons, from whoſe Beneficence we neither have reap'd, nor poſſibly can reap any Fruits ourſelves. Thoſe with whom we have no perſonal Intercourſe,

— to whom we are, and ever muſt be unknown, — Men of remote Nations, are honour'd and lov'd by us on account of remarkably generous Actions. We are naturally led to praiſe them; and, if their Characters are inſulted, to defend them. We delight to dwell on the pleaſing Subject, whether in our Diſcourſes, or Meditations; and cheriſh with Fondneſs the very Image, where we are incapable of making any Acquaintance with the Original.

INDEED there is ſo ſtrong a Foundation for this in our Nature, that we cannot but honour the Memory of Benefactors long ſince diſcharg'd from Life, (if thoſe may be ſaid to die, who are preſerv'd in perpetual Remembrance:) and ſo exceſſive hath been the Regard ſometimes ſhewn them, that it hath degenerated into Idolatry; and thoſe whom Men thought they could not ſufficiently praiſe, they have ador'd.

IT is ſtil more to our Purpoſe to obſerve, that if Men form to themſelves the Character of One who never really exiſted, and make *Goodneſs* the Principal Part, they can raiſe the Paſſions of Love, Eſteem, and Veneration to almoſt any Heighth, and grow enamour'd of their own Imaginations. A plain Argument this, that the Character ſtrikes them, and ſuits a certain natural Taſte they have; which, tho' it be weaker in Some than Others, is never totally extinguiſh'd in Any.

WHAT hath been hitherto advanc'd will ſerve to prove, that the Exerciſe of Beneficence is agreeable with the Will of the Supreme Being; and from hence ariſes ſtrict and proper Obligation. For, if God was the Author of our Nature, he muſt likewiſe be ſo of every natural Tendency; which being in Man ſtrong towards Benevolence, this cannot be eſteem'd a ſlight Intimation of Divine Will. Had it been deſign'd to leave Men indifferent toward Others, God would not have implanted in us a Principle, which muſt deſtroy this Indifference; — a Principle, which conſtantly ſuggeſts to us Kindneſs and Good-will, and puſhes us on to thoſe Acts of Generoſity, which are hereby made pleaſing in the Performance, and comfortable in the Reflection.

BUT, I am not now ſpeaking to Heathens, but Chriſtians. To the former no Arguments can reach, which are not drawn from human Reaſon; to the latter God hath vouchſaf'd greater Light, and ſuch as will be found, upon Trial, to ſwallow up every other Diſcovery.

IN the Scriptures then, we have the brighteſt Manifeſtations not only of God's Nature and Conduct, but of his Will; that the One may ſerve us as a Pattern to be follow'd in every Thing by us imitable, and the other as a Law to be obey'd in every Thing by us practicable.

AND is not God there deſcrib'd as [a] *Love* itſelf; — as having [b] *created* us at firſt; — as *preſerving* [c] us in Being; — as [d] ſupplying our Neceſſi-

[a] 1 Joh. iv. 8.
[b] Gen. i. 27.
[c] Acts xvii. 28.
[d] Matt. vi. 31, 32, 33.

Neceſſities, and reaching out Matter for the Gratification [e] of all our innocent Deſires? Is He not ſet forth to us as our [f] *Support* in the Enjoyment of good Fortune, and our [g] *Refuge* under the Oppreſſion of bad Fortune? Doth He not, according to the Scripture Account, pity [h] *our Infirmities*, and [i] *heal* our Sins, in a Way, which Nothing but his infinite Wiſdom could contrive or execute? And is not this fair Example, (by the Advantage of which we live, and enjoy ſome Degrees of Happineſs, and ſtil hope for greater,) ſufficient to inculcate on us a Benevolence ſuitable to the Favours we ourſelves have received?

[e] Pſal. cxlv. 16.
[f] — lxii. 6.
[g] ver. 8.
[h] Heb. iv. 15.
[i] 1 Pet. ii. 24.

HOWEVER, as if this were not enough, God is pleaſed to condeſcend farther to us, and to exact by many expreſs Precepts, what was before recommended by his own moſt engaging Example.

THUS, we are requir'd To *do Good* [k] *unto all Men*, — *To do as we would* [l] *be done unto*, — *To love our Neighbour* [m] *as we do our ſelves*, — *To bear one anothers* [n] *Burdens*, — *To be pitiful* [o] *and courteous*, — *To love our very* [p] *Enemies*, and — *To overcome the Evil we have ſuffered from them, by the Good* [q] *we do to them.*

[k] Gal. vi. 10.
[l] Matt. vii. 12.
[m] — xxii. 39.
[n] Gal. vi. 2.
[o] 1 Pet. iii. 8.
[p] Matt. v. 44.
[q] Rom. xii. 21.

THESE Precepts, with many others of the ſame Kind, almoſt every where ſcatter'd thro' the New Teſtament, are ſtil farther enforc'd from theſe affecting Conſiderations, *viz.* That God declares he will ſhew us Mercy and Favour only as we ſhew it to [r] Others; — That we are taught to aſk Favour on this very [s] Condition;

[r] Matt. vi. 14, 15.
[s] ver. 12.

dition; and That the Proceedings of the laſt great Day are repreſented as taking their principal Turn from this Point. Hear our Bleſſed Saviour's own Words. *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World. For I was hungry, and ye gave me Meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me Drink.* When theſe Things are conſider'd, nothing farther need be urg'd in Enforcement of this Duty. Matt. xxv. 34, 35.

BUT, tho' the Obligation in general be from hence apparent, yet there is One Point ſtil to be inſiſted on under this Head, and which is diſtinctly ſuggeſted in the Text itſelf; I mean, the Neceſſity of Perſeverance. *Let us not*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *be weary in Well-doing.*

AND this indeed, (whatever may be thought by thoſe, who ſeem to be as little friendly to the Practical Part of Religion, as to the Doctrinal,) doth immediately reſult from the very Nature of Duty. This, if it be truly and properly ſuch, muſt equally oblige all Perſons it was intended to oblige, and at all Times ſuited to the Diſcharge of it. From hence it will appear plainly, that we are as much bound to the Performance Now, as we were formerly; and conſequently, that no Acts of paſt Obedience can be alledg'd to excuſe a preſent Diſobedience.

IN Truth, the Deſertion of Duty is, in ſome Reſpects, worſe than the not having perform'd it at all. For it carries with it This Reflection on the Duty itſelf, That Men have try'd it,

it, and upon Trial have not found it worth performing: Whereas the Example of one who never had Experience of this Point, muſt carry with it leſs Force; becauſe ſuch a Perſon may be ſuppos'd ignorant of the real Beauty and Excellence of Virtue.

THE Goſpel indeed is a Diſpenſation of Mercy. It offers Pardon of Sin upon Repentance, thro' the Merits of our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour: And, making Allowances for human Infirmity, it repeats the Pardon after Relapſes into Sin, upon a Renewal of our Repentance. This Conſideration will adminiſter Comfort to every Man burthen'd with the Senſe of paſt Errors, and endeavouring to make what future Amends he can.

BUT then, even this Diſpenſation itſelf, by ſuppoſing the Neceſſity of Repentance, ſuppoſes likewiſe the Neceſſity of Perſeverance. For, this Repentance is but a bringing us back to that Duty from whence we had diverted; and without which Return, no former Obedience, retracted by a final Diſobedience, can be of any Avail.

SEE what the Holy Scriptures deliver both in the Old Teſtament, and the New! *When the Righteous*, ſaith the Prophet, *turneth away from his Righteouſneſs, and committeth Iniquity,——*

Ezek. xviii. 24. *all his Righteouſneſs that he hath done ſhall not be mentioned: In his Treſpaſs that he hath treſpaſſed, and in his Sin that he hath ſinned, in them ſhall he die.* And to the like Purpoſe St. *Peter*; *If* [Men] *after they have eſcaped the Pollu-*

Pollutions of the World, thro' the Knowledge of The Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter End is worſe with them than the Beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the Way of Righteouſneſs, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment delivered unto them. So ſtrongly doth our holy Religion engage us to return from a bad Life, and to perſevere in a good Life! 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21.

WHAT I have now offer'd concerns indeed Perſeverance in the general. But, the Subject I am upon, and the Occaſion of this Solemnity, will eaſily lead us to make a particular Application of it to the Duty of Charity. This is what the Apoſtle, in the Text, recommends; and in the Diſcharge of this he exhorts Men not to be faint, or *weary*.

INDEED, as I have ſaid before in the Entrance of this Diſcourſe, there were particular Reaſons ſubſiſting when our Apoſtle wrote, Why he ſhould exhort them to perſevere in this Duty; Reaſons ariſing from certain Difficulties which Chriſtians Then eſpecially labour'd under, and which might tempt them to ſlacken their Hands, and be backward in the Diſcharge of it. The Change of Times, it is true, hath made ſome Alteration in the Caſe; and ſome of the Difficulties the firſt Chriſtians labour'd under, are Now no more. But then, Others have ariſen in their ſtead, which much abate the Fervour of Charity, and make *the Love of many to wax cold.*

II. WHAT theſe are I ſhall now Enquire under my *Second* general Head; which being pointed out, the Neceſſity of exhorting Men *not to be weary in Well-doing*, will be found as great in the preſent Times, as in the firſt Beginnings of Chriſtianity.

THE Obſtructions which I have now in view, may be reduc'd to one or other of theſe Heads, *viz.* Irregular Self-Love, or Unjuſt Prejudice.

I CALL the Self-Love, now mention'd, *irregular*, to diſtinguiſh it from that Principle which Nature hath implanted in us, and which, rightly manag'd, leads us to conſult not only our own particular private Gratifications, but thoſe likewiſe of which other Men are capable. This I have taken Occaſion to hint already; and ſhall here add, that if Men duly attend to the generous Principle implanted in them, and diſcipline their ſeveral Paſſions accordingly, they may bring themſelves to an Habit of wiſhing well to Others; in which Caſe, the inward Pleaſure which muſt ariſe from doing Good to them, will make Their Intereſts their Own; and conſequently Self-Love will entirely fall in with Benevolence.

BUT, the Miſchief lies here: Men are too apt to conſider Self, and Self only. Having ſeparated themſelves from their Fellow-Creatures, they are buſied in attending to the lower and leſs creditable Indulgences; and ſo can allow no Room to look abroad into the Concerns

or

or Intereſts of Other Men. Hence, by Degrees, the Generous Principle is weaken'd, and comes to loſe a conſiderable Part of its Effect; whilſt the Paſſion of Private Intereſt grows into a monſtrous Exceſs, til at length it not only brings a Man to neglect the Advantage of Others, but leads him into the worſt Methods of Cruelty and Oppreſſion.

THIS vicious Paſſion ſhews itſelf more eſpecially in Two Ways. Sometimes in the Way of *Avarice*; by which I would be underſtood to mean Not only a Deſire of drawing all Gain to a Man's Self, but an Unwillingneſs to part with this Gain upon the moſt preſſing Occaſion. The Other, tho' it ſeems to be directly oppoſite, is only a different Modification of the ſame Paſſion, and may not unfitly be termed *Luxury*; by which I intend an Exceſs in perſonal Expence, in order to furniſh out greater Elegancies for a Man's Self, than his Station or Circumſtances require, or will admit of. The Effect of each is This: In the one Caſe, the Man who may without Prejudice to himſelf do Acts of Charity, is indiſpos'd to do them: In the other, tho' he may on ſome Accounts be diſpos'd, he hath render'd himſelf in certain Degrees incapable; at leaſt, without ſuch Retrenchments in his Way of Living, as the Habit of Self-Indulgence forbids.

BETWEEN theſe Two there is This Difference. Where the One prevails, the Sentiments both of Generoſity and Compaſſion are almoſt entirely extinguiſh'd: where the Other governs,

They may ſubſiſt in ſome Meaſure; but then, as they cannot be gratified, a ſtrong Conflict muſt ariſe within a Man's own Mind between the generous and the ſelfiſh Principle; whilſt the One inclines him to Charity, and the Other, having been indulg'd too far, cannot part with thoſe Advantages to others, which the Man hath made neceſſary to himſelf.

BUT, beſide the Obſtructions in this Work, which ariſe from the irregular Self-Love, now inſiſted on, there are others grounded on unjuſt Prejudices: And theſe are rais'd either againſt Charity in general, under the preſent Circumſtances of Things; --- or elſe againſt that particular Method of Charity, which it is the Deſign of the preſent Solemnity to encourage.

WITH reference to Charity in general, it is, I am afraid, too prevailing a Prejudice, (tho' not always publickly own'd,) that the Laws having made Proviſion for the Neceſſitous, there can be no proper Room for Charity; — that thoſe who really want Relief, may have it: In which Caſe, to neglect the Method preſcrib'd by publick Wiſdom, and to go out of the Way, muſt be attended with theſe two Inconveniences, *viz.* That it removes the Burthen of maintaining the Poor from thoſe to whom it properly belongs; and avoids the Application to thoſe Perſons, who are the fitteſt Judges of their Wants. To which may be added, that ſome are pleas'd to think Liberality this Way is of great Diſſervice to the Publick, as it diſcourages Induſtry, and feeds the Lazineſs and Vices

Vices of thoſe, who might ſupport themſelves if they would, and who ought to be forc'd to do ſo, if unwilling.

THIS is an Obſtruction ſometimes thrown in the Way of Charity. And tho' it will appear by what I ſhall deliver under my next Head, that the above-mention'd Allegations are founded on a wrong State of the Caſe, and of Force only againſt that Indiſcretion in the Management of Charity, which every Man of Senſe cenſures; yet it is no Wonder they ſhould have a ſtrong Effect on many, whilſt aided by the irregular Self-Love already mention'd; from which as they received Support, ſo do they likewiſe in Return give Self-Love ſome Colour and Pretence of Reaſon.

BUT the Prejudice I am principally concern'd about at preſent is That, which hath been thrown in the Way of the particular Charity we are Now met to encourage. This was intended for the Promotion of Religion, and the Service of the Publick: And the Deſign hath been ſo wiſely conducted in the general, as to approve itſelf to ſerious Perſons, and thoſe who have a ſincere Regard to both. Yet even this hath not eſcap'd Reproach; whilſt the Principle from whence it proceeds hath been miſrepreſented, — the Effects of it ſet forth as hurtful, — and the Promoters ridicul'd and traduc'd *. One might expect to find ſome very ſubſtantial Reaſons to maintain a Cauſe on which ſo much Zeal hath been beſtow'd. IN

* See *The Fable of the Bees.* Ed. 2. p. 285, &c.

IN Oppoſition then to what I have mention'd as the End and Deſign of this Charity, it hath been affirm'd, that our Method of educating poor Children is unfriendly to Society, and of no Service to Religion. We have been told by one, who purpoſely conſider'd the Subject, That Charity Schools introduce an Habit of Sloth and Idleneſs; and unfit Perſons, when grown up, for downright Labour, both as to Strength and Inclination *: — That the Proficiency made in theſe Schools, puts Children above the Condition they were born to, — makes them vain, inſolent, and untractable, — unwilling to take Pains in the lower Offices of Life, and to ſubmit to thoſe, who tho' ſuperior in Quality, are inferior in † Knowledge; — That by theſe means the more laborious Employments are declin'd, and want Hands, whilſt Trades are oppreſs'd with Numbers, and ſuffer as much from the Over-flow of Profeſſors, as other Employments do from the Want of them ‡. To this hath been added, that neither doth Religion receive any Advantage from this Kind of Education; — that the moſt knowing and polite Part of a Nation have every where the leaſt of Religion, whilſt Innocence and Honeſty are no where more general than amongſt the Illiterate ||.

ALL this hath been urg'd with particular Confidence by a Writer, who hath allow'd no Quarter

* *Ibid.* p. 328, 329, 341.
† *Ibid.* p. 329, 330.
‡ *Ibid.* p. 342, &c.
|| *Ibid.* p. 304, 352, &c.

Quarter to Perſons in different Sentiments. Theſe he hath repreſented as govern'd either by Paſſion, or Vanity, or Self-Intereſt, or Party *. Real Charity, it ſeems, whatever it might have in the Beginning, hath at preſent no Share in the Work; but, as the Thing itſelf, he contends, is wrong, ſo the Motives which induce Men to promote it, are irregular.

NOR hath this kind of Oppoſition died with the Writer I have now in view. It hath been carried on by Succeſſors in the ſame bad Cauſe; and like Objections and Invectives are ſtil made.

THE Conſideration of this will ſhew, that Exhortations to perſevere in the Duty of Charity, are as proper Now, as they were in the more early Times. If certain Circumſtances were Then leſs favourable to the Diſcharge of it, yet the Fervour of Religion was ſtronger, eſpecially whilſt ſupported by a Series of Miracles which drew Attention. And if Men readily parted with the Whole of their Poſſeſſions, they conſider'd this as the Inſurance of a future Inheritance, on which they expected ſoon to enter. And for the little while they might continue here, they had a Support out of the common Stock, the Prayers of their Brethren, and the Praiſes of their Enemies. The very Perſecutors of the Chriſtians, tho' they cenſur'd what they term'd their Obſtinacy, yet could not forbear to commend their Charity, and to propoſe it as proper Matter of Imitation.

* *Ibid.* p. 313, 314, 317, 325.

III. I SHALL now, under my *Third* Head, attempt to remove the before-mention'd Obſtructions, by ſhewing that they are built on no ſufficient Grounds of Reaſon and Truth.

As to the *firſt* Source of Obſtructions, *viz.* Irregular Self-Love, whether it ſhews itſelf in the Deſire of Wealth, or the Love of Pleaſure, or in Vanity, Every Argument which ſerves to prove, that the Paſſion is in itſelf wrong, might be pertinently urg'd on this Occaſion, — to thinking Men at leaſt, and ſuch as are able, and willing to attend to it. But, I would chuſe rather to obſerve, that the Self-Love now under Conſideration, whilſt it prevents the doing Acts of Charity, doth in ſome reſpects defeat itſelf, by depriving Men of much greater Satisfaction, than the Indulgence of this Paſſion can procure.

BE it, that the Avaricious, the Voluptuous, and the Vain have their ſeveral Pleaſures: Yet theſe cannot be compar'd with that ſolid Satisfaction, which ariſes from the Conſciouſneſs of a generous Action: Of which this is no ſmall Proof, that the former are attended with Anxiety, and ſucceeded by Remorſe; whereas no Man ever repented of *Well-doing*, — no Man ever recollected a charitable Action, but with the ſame kind of Pleaſure he firſt found in the Performance. To this may be added farther, that the Proportion which the Expence of Charity bears to a Man's real Income, is ſuch, as can make no material Difference in his way of Living. This at leaſt may be affirm'd, That

let

let him value the before-mention'd Pleaſures at what Rate he will, yet the Increaſe of Satiſfaction from the Conſciouſneſs of *Well-doing*, will make ample Amends for any little Abatements of his Wealth, or any little Retrenchments of his Pleaſures.

STIL Conſiderations of this Kind, (whatever Weight properly belongs to them,) will have ſmall Influence on the ſelfiſh Man, — on him who hath kept the generous Principle under, and loſt, in a great Degree, the very Taſte of Doing Good. To ſuch a Perſon it may be proper to ſuggeſt, that by indulging this Paſſion he diſſerves his own favourite Intereſt; ſince by withholding his Hand from the Neceſſitous, he doth really loſe more than he ſaves.

FOR the moſt part Thoſe, who are denied that charitable Subſiſtence by Others which they want, will ſubſiſt themſelves at the Expence of Others; and that either in the Way of ſecret Fraud, or more open Violence: In which Caſe, as no Man's Property is ſecure, ſo perhaps he, who is moſt backward to do a charitable Action, will not be the leaſt Sufferer.

BUT however this ſhall prove, yet as the Publick muſt receive Advantages from providing carefully for the Wants of its Members, ſo muſt it proportionably ſuffer by neglecting to make ſuch Proviſion. In theſe Sufferings each ſingle Perſon muſt expect to bear his Part; and conſequently become leſs able either to increaſe his Stock, or to maintain his Pleaſures. So much is the vicious Paſſion, now treated of, a Puniſhment to itſelf!

THE next Source of Obſtructions to Charity, is, unjuſt Prejudice, or, an embracing Opinions to its Diſadvantage, which have no ſufficient Foundation in Reaſon and Fact.

AND the *firſt* of theſe affects Charity in general, under the preſent Circumſtances of Things; being drawn from the publick Proviſion which the Laws have made for the Neceſſitous. This (as ſome are pleas'd to think,) ſuperſedes all Occaſion for private and particular Charity.

BUT, are theſe Laws always punctually executed? Are there no Perſons, who want, and ſollicit this Relief, denied it? Are each Man's Wants ſupplied to the full, and in ſuch a manner, as ſhall render all other Aſſiſtance needleſs? Doth this very Proviſion extend any farther than the Neceſſaries of Life, even where it is moſt punctually made? And will there not be room enough for private Perſons to contribute ſomewhat in order to make Life more comfortable, — to thoſe at leaſt, whoſe Poverty is owing to Misfortune, and whoſe former Merits may give them a ſtil higher Title to Compaſſion?

I AM not here pleading for Perſons of a diſſolute or abandon'd Character. Theſe deſerve to ſuffer. Let them feel the Inconveniences they would not prevent. Their Sufferings may have a good Effect on others. But modeſt, virtuous Perſons, who have endeavour'd to ſupport themſelves in the beſt Ways they could, and who would ſtil go on to do ſo,

ſo, if Age, or Infirmity of ſome kind or other did not diſable them, ought in Equity to be conſider'd. Their Diſtreſſes ſhould be leſſen'd as much as poſſible, ſince they cannot be entirely cur'd; and the Remainder of Life made at leaſt tolerable.

BEYOND all this it may be obſerv'd, that there are many Caſes of Charity, for which the Laws have made no Proviſion at all. I have juſt hinted ſome Inſtances in the Beginning of this Diſcourſe, and on which there will be none Occaſion to enlarge.

ONE of theſe, however, it may be proper to ſpeak ſomewhat to diſtinctly; I mean the charitable Education of thoſe Children, whoſe Parents are unable, or in ſome Inſtances unwilling to give them an Education.

THIS is a Point of the vaſteſt Concern not only to the Children themſelves, who do immediately partake the Benefit, but to the Publick likewiſe; — as it increaſes the Number of uſeful Members, and improves in the beſt manner thoſe natural Abilities, which might otherwiſe have been loſt, or perhaps turn'd to the Miſchief of their Country.

THE Children I am ſpeaking of, if left to themſelves, and without the Direction of any forming Hand, will of courſe become diſſolute and ungovernable; — will contract Vices not to be corrected afterwards; each will corrupt another, and their Irregularities grow every Day: Being void of any religious or moral Principles, they will meet with no inward

Checks; and ſo at length will become finiſh'd and harden'd Criminals.

ALL theſe Miſchiefs are remedied (as far as human Wiſdom can provide a Remedy,) in the Way now recommended to your Encouragement. By erecting theſe Schools, Children, as yet innocent, are put under proper Management. The Order and Diſcipline of theſe Places will prevent their contracting vicious Habits. The Knowledge of Religion and Virtue will be taught early, and be ſo deeply rooted in them, as to become governing Principles of their Actions. The leſſer Arts preparatory to future Employments will be learnt; by which Advantage likewiſe they will not only be enabled to refreſh their Minds with the Precepts they were taught formerly, but to go on to greater Meaſures of Perfection. And having been thus employ'd during their Childhood in that Kind of Induſtry which is ſuited to their tender Age, they will at length be plac'd out to thoſe Employments for which they are beſt qualified. This at leaſt gives an hopeful Proſpect of future Good: And if we are ſometimes diſappointed in our Hopes, this is no more than what happens in other like Caſes. We are concern'd no farther than to do our beſt, and to rely on Providence.

YET, I cannot forbear obſerving, that the Succeſs of this Kind of Education hath outdone what might reaſonably have been expected from it. In a Courſe of more than *Fourty* Years from the firſt Inſtitution of theſe Schools to the preſent

ſent Time, there have been ſcarce any, (if any at all) who having gone through the Diſcipline of theſe Places, have been afterwards convicted of any capital Crime. A Conſideration highly to their Advantage, tho' it ſhould be allow'd, that many Perſons thus educated, have not anſwer'd to the full what the pious Inſtitutors have propos'd, or the generous Contributors have wiſh'd and hop'd for.

NOTWITHSTANDING, Objections (as I ſaid,) have been made againſt this very Inſtitution, by a Writer, who purpoſely conſider'd the Subject *; in which will be found, (with whatever Air of Confidence alledg'd,) neither Truth of Fact, nor Juſtneſs of Reflection; — nothing but Words artfully thrown together, to prejudice the ill-judging Reader.

AND *Firſt*, it hath been objected, that theſe Schools introduce an Habit of Sloth and Idleneſs in Children.

THIS muſt appear ſurpriſing to thoſe, who have been uſed to reckon them the beſt Seminaries of Diligence. One might be tempted by ſuch a Repreſentation to imagine, that they were Schools of Diverſion and Entertainment, and Not, what they were intended to be, Places where Children are conſtantly employ'd in ſomething or other ſuited to their Age.

BUT when this Writer came to explain this Paradox, he hath told us; " That few Chil-
" dren

* See *An Eſſay on Charity Schools*, in *The Fable of the Bees*, p. 285. Ed. 2.

" dren make any Progreſs at School, but they " are capable of being employ'd in ſome Buſi- " neſs or other: So that every Hour theſe " poor People ſpend at their Book, is ſo much " Time loſt to Society." And then he hath gone on to affirm, " that Going to School, in " compariſon with Working, is Idleneſs *".

BUT, did this Writer conſider, that the poor Children, thus ſent to School, are for the moſt part ſuch, as would otherwiſe have been without any Employment at all? — ſuch, as would have been otherwiſe left entirely to their own Conduct? Did he conſider, that few bodily Labours are ſuited to Perſons of that Age; and yet, that ſome ſuch Employments are found in many of theſe Schools? Did he conſider, that theſe very Children have Souls as well as Bodies; and that whilſt proper Care is taken to confirm the One, ſomewhat likewiſe ſhould be done for the Improvement of the Other? Was it in his Intention, that ſuch Children ſhould be conſider'd rather as Beaſts of Burthen, than as rational Beings? Or, could he think that vaſt Strength, without a well-diſpos'd Mind, would not prove even dangerous to Society?

IN *what* then have theſe Schools diſſerv'd the Publick? Is it, that Children are there oblig'd to do Something, whereas they would otherwiſe have done Nothing? Is it, that they are there taught Modeſty and Submiſſion, which would not have been learnt elſewhere? — That the

* *Ibid.* p. 328, 329.

the Neceſſity of Diligence in ſome future Calling is inculcated, of which they would otherwiſe have form'd no Notion? — That the Duties of Juſtice and Truth are ſtrongly recommended, with the Senſe of which they would not have poſſeſs'd themſelves, if left to their own Management? And laſtly, That the Principles of Religion, the Guard of all the reſt, are there imprinted on their Minds, to which they would otherwiſe have been Strangers? If theſe are Diſſervices to the Publick, we acknowledge them. But ſurely, no wiſe Lawgiver, no thinking Philoſopher ever thought ſo. No one was ever capable of thinking ſo, til a Writer aroſe, who maintained withal that *Private Vices* are the Foundation of *Publick Benefits*.

IT hath been objected, *Secondly*, that the Learning in theſe Schools acquir'd, renders Children vain, inſolent, and untractable; and indiſpoſes them to ſubmit to thoſe, who tho' ſuperior in Quality may be inferior in Knowledge *.

AND here we muſt allow, that if the profounder Arts and Sciences were taught in theſe Schools, and ſuch as could be of no uſe in future Life, a Miſchief would ariſe indeed. Poor Children would then be apt to cheriſh Thoughts above what they are intended for, and ſo far as this be diſqualified to act a proper Part hereafter. But, is this really the Caſe? Is not the Learn-

* *Ibid.* p. 329, 330.

Learning, in theſe Places taught, confin'd to the lower Inſtances? At moſt doth it reach any farther, than to thoſe Particulars, which may be neceſſary to qualify them for ſome certain Employ intended? Have not private Perſons, long before the Erecting theſe Schools, contributed towards ſuch Inſtruction of helpleſs Children in moſt Parts of the Kingdom; and done this, as without Cenſure from Others, ſo without the leaſt Apprehenſion in themſelves that they were deſtroying Modeſty, and laying in a Foundation for Inſolence?

BE it, that Perſons of theſe low Attainments ſet ſome Value upon them: Is there any Thing in this unreaſonable, or prejudicial? And can This be ſuppos'd to ſet them above thoſe Employments, to which theſe very Qualifications are neceſſary?

IF indeed, in any Place this Point of Education hath been carried into an Exceſs, there will be Room to correct this Miſtake, by conſidering Not what Children may perhaps be capable of learning, but what may and will be of Uſe to them when learnt. But, an Inſtance to this Purpoſe, (if ſuch a one might be produc'd,) could not anſwer the Deſign of this Writer. It might afford Room to correct an Error, but could be no Reaſon to overthrow the Charity.

NOR can it be preſum'd that theſe lower Attainments will indiſpoſe Children for a proper Submiſſion to Superiors. In theſe Schools they will learn their Duty, and their Intereſt much

much better, and the more Senſe they gain, the more will they diſcern the Neceſſity of Submiſſion.

BUT after all, how few are there of the ſuperior Quality, mention'd by this Writer, who are wanting in theſe low Attainments? And how great muſt have been his Diſtreſs, when, to maintain his Cauſe, he was forc'd to ſuppoſe Caſes as frequent, which ſeldom, or ſcarce ever happen at all.

AND yet, if they were frequent, he ought to have conſider'd, that Superiority of Underſtanding is One Thing, and Superiority as to theſe Attainments is Another. Admitting therefore, that theſe Advantages may put a Man in the Way of making farther Improvements, where there is Time, and Leiſure for making them, yet as Perſons in this low Life have little Time to ſpare, it cannot be expected that they will gain any exorbitant Degrees of Knowledge. The moſt theſe Advantages can ſerve for, is, to enable them to conſult the Word of God on every *Seventh* Day, and to refreſh their Minds with the Diſcoveries he hath there made of himſelf. An Improvement this, which no *Chriſtian*, no *Proteſtant* at leaſt can envy them.

IT hath been objected, *Thirdly*, that by this Method of Education, and the Management conſequent thereupon, Some Profeſſions in Life are oppreſs'd, whilſt Others are in a great Degree neglected; and this to the certain Diſadvantage of both *.

* *Ibid.* p. 342, &c.

How far there is any Foundation in Fact for this Charge, muſt be left to thoſe, who have more Opportunities of knowing the real State of the Thing than I have. However, as this Writer hath particularly mention'd *Trades* and *Husbandry*, thus much I ſhall venture to obſerve, that neither of theſe can be ſuppos'd to ſuffer, as he contends, from the Method before us.

CHILDREN of ſuch low Rank, are uſually employ'd ſome way or other (if employ'd at all,) in the Places where they are born and bred; ſo that neither doth the City ordinarily diſcharge itſelf of ſuch Inhabitants to ſupply the Country, nor the Country to fill the City. And whilſt the Contributors to, and Directors of theſe Schools are generally Perſons upon the Place, and attach'd to its particular Intereſt, it is probable they will conſult it as well as they can, and not rob a favourite Intereſt of thoſe Hands which are neceſſary to its Support.

BUT, ſuppoſing there were no Charity Schools in being, Would This mend the Matter? Would Children bred in the City take Refuge in the Country for the ſake of the Farmer's Intereſt, and engage themſelves in a laborious Employment at the low Rate this Writer hath contended they ſhould? Was this frequently done before theſe Schools were erected? Or rather, would not a great Part of thoſe, who have Now the Advantage of ſome Education, have otherwiſe waſted away their Childhood and Youth in Idleneſs, to ſay no worſe; and by

theſe Means have been indiſpos'd to ſettle to any Employment whatſoever? If this would have been the Caſe, then the Method now purſu'd is ſo far from hurting the Intereſts of Society, that it moſt effectually promotes them, by rendering many Members of ſervice, who might otherwiſe have been not only uſeleſs but miſchievous.

IT hath been objected, *Laſtly*, that Religion receives no Advantage from this Kind of Education. Knowledge, it ſeems, is of no ſervice this Way. "The moſt knowing and polite "have the leaſt of Religion; — whilſt Inno-"cence and Honeſty are no where more gene-"ral than amongſt the Illiterate *."

BUT, hath this Writer clearly ſhewn what he meant by *Knowledge?* Did he mean The Knowledge of Religion? Had he ſaid ſo, the Abſurdity would have been groſs indeed. Did he mean The Knowledge of the profounder Arts and Sciences? This certainly muſt have its Uſe in ſettling the Principles of Religion, in drawing out its Precepts, and enforcing them. But, however uſeful this may be to Some, yet it is not neceſſary to All: Nor doth any one contend for ſuch an high Education of poor Children as this requires; the Practice of whoſe Duties may be ſufficiently promoted by much leſs Attainments. Did he then, by *Knowledge* mean, an Acquaintance with the Conduct and Practice of the World, *i. e.* with the Vices,

* *Ibid.* p. 304.

and Follies of Men? If he meant This, we muſt allow it often happens, that the Knowing and Polite have the leaſt of Religion: It throws Temptations in their way, which are often too powerful for their Reaſon. But This is not the Knowledge taught in theſe Schools. They are the Principles, and Duties of Religion which are there inculcated. And can it be ſaid, that the leſs a Man knows of theſe, the more religious he is like to be?

LET us only conſider with what View theſe Schools were firſt erected, and in what Way they have been manag'd ſince.

THE principal End at firſt was, the Promotion of Religion; and the Deſign was lay'd by ſome of the beſt Men the Nation had. But, had theſe ſo little Skil as to propoſe a Method of no Service to the End aim'd at? — Or, had this prov'd the Caſe, is it credible that ſuch an ill-concerted Project would have been immediately favour'd by Numbers of prudent and religious Perſons, who knew the real Intereſt of Religion, and had it truly at Heart? And yet we know, and this very Writer hath acknowledg'd, that many, eminent in theſe Characters, have eſpous'd the Cauſe of Charity Schools, — have themſelves contributed liberally towards them, and recommended them in a very effectual manner to Others.

AS to the Management likewiſe of later Conducters, I muſt affirm, that To teach Children early the firſt Principles, and Duties of Religion; To explain theſe (as they are explain'd

plain'd to them,) in a Way ſuited to their Apprehenſions; To watch their Conduct; To prevent the Growth of Vice; To cheriſh every Spark of Virtue; And to keep up the Senſe of Religion by the Exerciſe both of publick and private Worſhip; To do all theſe punctually, (as I hope, and believe they are done,) are the moſt likely Methods of giving a religious Turn to the Mind: And where theſe fail, no other Method will be effectual.

HAVING thus done with the Objections, I ſhall now paſs on to my Laſt general Head, *viz.* To explain, and enforce the Motive ſuggeſted by the Apoſtle, *In due Seaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not.*

MEN ought not to think that the Expences laid out this Way, tho' beſtow'd on ſuch, as may never be capable of repaying them, are yet loſt. The Word of God teaches otherwiſe; *and his Word is ſure.*

BESIDE what the Apoſtle teaches here concerning the Fruits of *Well-doing*, there are other Paſſages of Scripture which explain the Matter more diſtinctly, and point out the particular Advantages we may expect to reap from it.

THUS, *Give*, ſaith our Bleſſed Lord, *and it ſhall be given you; good Meaſure, preſſed down, and ſhaken together, and running over, ſhall Men give into your Boſom: For with the ſame Meaſure that ye mete withal, it ſhall be meaſur'd to you again. He that giveth to the Poor,* Luke vi. 38.

Prov. xxviii. 27. — xix. 17. *Poor*, ſaith the Wiſe Man, *ſhall not lack*; For, in doing this, *he lendeth unto the Lord*; *and that which he hath given will he pay him again.* And beyond this St. *Paul* directs *Timothy* to *Charge them that are rich in this World, that they do Good, that they be rich in good Works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate; laying up in Store for themſelves a good Foundation againſt the Time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal Life.* Theſe Paſſages ſet forth to us, in a more particular manner, thoſe Fruits of Charity, which we may expect *to reap, if we faint not.*

1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19.

And Firſt, from the Diſcharge of this Duty we may reaſonably expect to be favour'd in our own Concerns, ſhould we happen in the Courſe of Things to need ſuch Favour. Then our former charitable Deeds will plead for us, and recommend us ſtrongly. Not that we can depend, (as I ſaid before,) on a Repayment of Services to be made by thoſe on whom ſuch Services are beſtow'd. This, for the moſt part is impoſſible; becauſe the greateſt Objects of Charity may be ſuch, as are incapable of making ſuch Returns. Yet, our *Labours of Love* are not loſt even on theſe. They are ſeen, and approv'd by the World, — the better Part of it at leaſt. They meet with ſome preſent Reward from the Eſteem, and Regard of Mankind. They make our good Fortune unenvied; and are apt to bring us Support, and Comfort under bad Fortune. The Caſe of ſuch Perſons, if reduc'd to Diſtreſs, we may preſume

ſume will be conſider'd with great Degrees of Favour.

BUT, there is a much better Ground of Truſt than this, *viz.* The Favour of Providence. If it may be expected from Men, that they will kindly regard the Pretenſions of a generous Perſon, yet Accidents ſometimes alter their Conduct, and defeat ſuch Expectations. But God is unchangeable. His Favour ever follows the Diſcharge of Duty; nor can we loſe it but by our own Miſconduct.

AND are there not particular Marks of Divine Approbation ſet on this Virtue of Charity in many Places of holy Scripture? Are we not taught, that *God is well pleaſed with ſuch Sacrifices as theſe?* — That thoſe who offer them ſhall be *the Children of the Higheſt?* — That *God is not unrighteous to forget our Work, and Labour of Love?* — And that *the Reward* of this Duty *ſhall be great?* Can we think that theſe Words have no Force, or Meaning?

Heb. xiii. 16.

Luke vi. 35.

Heb. vi. 10.

Luke vi. 35.

OR, if we were to reaſon only from the Nature of the Thing, might we not conclude, that to imitate God in that which may be called the favourite Perfection of his Nature, will recommend us to him, and conſequently entitle us to his Bleſſing? Might we not conclude, that *he who watereth ſhall be watered alſo himſelf*, and have an Increaſe of the Talents entruſted with him, in Proportion to the good Uſe and Improvement he hath made of them?

BUT,

BUT, this withall ſhould be remember'd, that the Concerns of particular Men in this Life muſt ever give way to the Good and Intereſt of the Whole. The Scheme of Providence is Great and Unſearchable; and we know not what that Scheme requires. It may therefore happen, that the Sufferings of a good Man ſhall be neceſſary to ſome important Deſign; in which caſe God himſelf may, even in a direct way, afflict him. Or, it may happen, for wiſe Ends of Providence likewiſe, that he may be given up for awhile to the Inſults of wicked Men. His beſt Actions may be traduc'd; and he may meet with Oppoſition even in thoſe Labours, which are directed to the Service of the Oppoſer. Folly may blind Men to their own real Intereſt: And ill Temper may ſometimes prompt them to contradict what they themſelves, in their ſober Thoughts, approve. Yet, this ought not to diſcourage any Man, who is conſcious of being engag'd in a worthy Labour. The Favour of God ſtil remains; and his Reward tho' diſtant, is yet certain.

IN the Words of my Text we are taught to expect the Fruits of *Well-doing*, not immediately to the full, but *in due Seaſon* hereafter. Had compleat Reward always follow'd cloſe upon the Duty, the Exhortation there given would have been needleſs. There would then have been no Grounds to apprehend that Men ſhould grow faint, or weary, whilſt refreſh'd by the Fruits of *Well-doing* immediately ſpringing up before them. But, the Order of Providence

vidence requires, that Things ſhould be manag'd otherwiſe; as for many Other Reaſons to us unknown, ſo for this likewiſe, To illuſtrate and heighthen our Virtue, — to prove our Faith, and to perfect our Obedience.

AND methinks the ſerious Chriſtian ſhould eaſily learn, To be *patient unto the Coming of the Lord*, when he reflects, (as St. *James* hath taught him to reflect,) that *the Husbandman waiteth for the precious Fruit of the Earth, and hath long Patience for it, until he receive the early, and the later Rain.* Should not *We alſo be patient, and ſtabliſh our Hearts, ſince the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh?* We ſee, there is ſome Diſtance between the Seed Time and the Harveſt; during which intermediate Space the Huſbandman feels ſome Anxieties, ſome Fears of Diſappointment: And yet he bears up notwithſtanding, waiting the Event with Patience. We, in like manner, in our beſt deſign'd, and beſt directed Labours may be ſubject to Caſualties; — may meet with Croſſes, and Interruptions from the Perverſeneſs of Men; and after all, may be in ſome Meaſure diſappointed as to our Succeſs. I have here put the Caſe at the worſt. James v. 7, 8.

BUT, in another Reſpect, the good Man, if he perſeveres in his Duty, cannot be diſappointed. The Comfort of having deſign'd well, and of having acted a good Part cannot be taken from him. His greateſt Hope is placed elſewhere; and *his Reward is with his God.* Iſai. xlix. 4.

THIS World paſſeth away, and we have but a ſhort Time to ſtruggle with Difficulties; Under which if natural Force and Courage be not ſufficient to ſupport us, nor Reaſon and Wiſdom to carry us on, — yet Religion, and the ſure, and great Rewards of Religion muſt do ſo, if we afford them a juſt Attention. Theſe cannot but animate us, when ſet in a ſtrong Light, and enable us not only to get the better of Difficulties, but to deſpiſe them.

TO conclude; We have all the Encouragements to perſevere in *Well-doing*, which a wiſe Man can wiſh for. And if Men cannot be prevail'd on by the Senſe of this; but inſtead of going on to greater Degrees of Perfection, ſhall retreat, and leave the good Work unfiniſh'd, Let them know, They will forfeit all the Merit of paſt Services; They will bring a Reflection on the Deſign they have dropt; They will not only loſe their Share in the Reward propos'd, but incur the Puniſhment of a traiterous Deſertion; Their paſt good Deeds will but aggravate the Evil of their Apoſtacy. Let this be conſider'd, and I need ſay no more.

FINIS.